



Area legislators continue fight against freeway route

Colleen Sparks

The Arizona Republic

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A controversial proposed freeway touted to alleviate traffic between the east and west Valley would be moved off track if two Southeast Valley legislators have their way.

State Rep. John McComish, R-Ahwatukee Foothills, and State Sen. John Huppenthal, R-Chandler, both majority whips, told residents at an Ahwatukee forum Wednesday night that they will keep pushing to see the freeway route moved to the Gila River Reservation. Their District 20 includes Ahwatukee, west Chandler and south Tempe.

The current proposal that members of South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team is considering would run the freeway along the Pecos Road alignment and cut through South Mountain Park, connecting to Interstate 10 at 55th Avenue.

Residents, including some freeway opponents, asked the two legislators for their opinions on the Pecos Road route.

Huppenthal and McComish said negotiations should continue with members of the Gila River Indian Community.

"I remain cautiously optimistic that we can work it out with them," McComish said. "It seems very difficult for me to believe it would go along Pecos," displacing hundreds of homes, he added.

Ultimately the Federal Highway Administration and Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) would make the final decision on whether to build the freeway and the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) would then decide whether to pay for it.

Ahwatukee resident Greta Rogers, an outspoken freeway opponent, encouraged Huppenthal and McComish to investigate the money ADOT has spent just on studying the freeway issue.

"The city (of Phoenix), maybe with your wisdom and help, could sit down and negotiate with Gila River," Rogers said.

South Mountain advisory team member John Rodriguez of Ahwatukee questioned the legislators on the issue.

"What if the (Gila River) nation says, 'No way' to a freeway? Are you leaning more towards building a freeway or scrapping the idea?" Rodriguez asked.

Huppenthal said he did not believe the South Mountain Freeway would be built on Pecos Road but if it were, sound barriers and buffers should be looked at to protect residents.

"I hope and pray it doesn't come to that," McComish said.

ADOT and MAG officials contend that the freeway would reduce Valley commuters' frustrations from the east to the west. Opponents say they are concerned about the environmental and health impacts, as well as homes that would be destroyed in its path.

McComish and Huppenthal also talked about:

- Whether state residents would have to pay taxes if roads were converted to toll roads, something discussed at the state level. Huppenthal said he believed the tolls would not be added on existing roads.
- State budget woes. The downturn in the housing market is leading to lower state tax collections and less money than planned to cover the adopted budget. The Joint Legislative Budget Committee is studying options, the legislators said.

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- Arkyan
- Posted: Oct 4, 2007 at 3:17 PM
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Oh, boo-hoo on Ahwatukee. I don't feel in the least bad for the people whose homes will be razed for this freeway - the route is by no means a brand new thing. It's been on the maps for well over a decade, and if people can't be bothered to educate themselves about the area they are planning to buy a home, well, I can't be bothered to feel bad for their situation.

- [Matthew9426](#) | [Profile](#)
- Posted: Oct 4, 2007 at 3:42 PM
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This has been on the books since the 80's. This will be the biggest waste of money this state has ever seen. I have no doubt in my mind that the freeway is a necessary thing, we need the reliver BAD. But here's how this is going to play out:

Gila River will say no way to the freeway unless you give us a fat stack of cash for the right-of-way rights and it will likely be a lease so it will have to be renewed. That will cost taxpayers a fortune. ---- OR----

ADOT and MAG will purchase the right-of-way from Ahwahtukee homeowners costing..... a fortune. the freeway will get built and the cost for that small stretch of freeway will be per mile more than any other freeway in the state before you even figure the cost of the land acquisition.

End result a necessary item for Arizona is going to end up costing Arizonans WAY more than it ever should.

- sns8snl
- Posted: Oct 4, 2007 at 4:18 PM
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Thanks for the graphic, AZRep, or at least a link to one showing the proposed routes. LOL

[OldCrusty](#) | [Profile](#)

Posted: Oct 4, 2007 at 5:48 PM

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Look at some older maps, sns8snl. I have a Arizona State map here in hand from 1984 (Purchased at a local 7-11) that show the proposed freeway. Looking at the map it shows all open range land with no other street or local roads in the area. So not saying people did not know about this is BS it's here right here. I would look at any home in the way as land specualtors or squatters and shuld only be paid the cost of the orignl purchase price and no more.

- [Jason5200](#) | [Profile](#)
- Posted: Oct 5, 2007 at 8:29 AM
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HEY GUYS I JUST MOVED TO AWATUKE. I CAN'T EVEN SPELL IT BUT I'M A GENIUS. OKAY HERE'S THE THING, I KNEW THE FREEWAY WAS GOING TO BE BUILT, BUT NOW I THINK IT MUST BE STOPPED. I'M SO SMART, I KNOW MORE THAN ADOT AND THEIR TRAFFIC MODELERS TO BOOT. THEY HAVE COMPUTERS CHURNING OUT TRAFFIC DATA, BUT I JUST USE MY HEAD. CAUSE I'M SO SMART. THISFREEWAY WON'T DO NOTHING. WE DON'T NEED TO BUILD IT. HI I'M FROM AWATUKE. STILL CAN'T SPELL IT.

- CorrectOpinion
- Posted: Oct 5, 2007 at 5:05 PM
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I attended the South Mountain Citizen Advisory Team meeting last night. It seemed to me, that the people on the Board thought they actually get to decide if the freeway gets built or not. However, the understanding I received from ADOT was that this Board gets to give their opinion as to whether they should build the freeway. Also, the public (i.e. citizens, businesses, politicians) is allowed to give their opinions.

- CorrectOpinion

- Posted: Oct 5, 2007 at 5:09 PM
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After the meeting, I spoke with one of the ADOT employees. I asked and he confirmed that the freeway had been planned in the '80s. It was, at the time, approved to build but was not funded. I asked why the City of Phoenix, after the approval, issued build permits for those houses that are supposed to be in the build path. The jist I got from him was Phoenix Politics. If anyone should pay for the houses it should be the City of Phoenix for issuing build permits and the developers for building in the previously approved freeway corridor.

- CorrectOpinion
- Posted: Oct 5, 2007 at 5:12 PM
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I also talked to one of the Board members. She basically told me that Gila River has absolutely no intention of providing land for the freeway corridor. Gila River does not want to give up any of their agricultural land to us "whities".

- CorrectOpinion
- Posted: Oct 5, 2007 at 5:16 PM
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The Draft Environmental Impact Study is being reviewed by MAG/FWHA. When approved, it will be provided to the public in several places, including FedEx/Kinkos. At that time, the public has 45 days to make comments/suggestions about the South Mountain Freeway project. After that, ADOT will make a decision on how and if to build.

- CorrectOpinion
- Posted: Oct 5, 2007 at 5:21 PM
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All of the environmental impact, air pollution, noise, etc are just stalling tactics for the freeway. The Rep above might want to go talk to his Mayor of Chandler since the Mayor supports the freeway. This freeway is NOT for Ahwatukee, it is for the rest of the Phx area. Everyone, except some residents in 'Tukee, want the freeway done. Sorry, if your house is in the way, move.

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